

Lyle Neff

STARBOTLE FOR THE PLAINTIFF

An opera in three scenes

Libretto by the composer
adapted from a story by Bret Harte

March 25, 1981

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SCENE TWO

THE WIDOW'S FARMHOUSE, EXTERIOR. IT IS SITUATED DIAGONALLY, STAGE LEFT. THE SECOND STORY HAS A WINDOW FACING THE AUDIENCE, BUT OUT OF VIEW OF THE REST OF THE STAGE. THERE IS A CLOTHES LINE WITH DRYING CLOTHES STAGE RIGHT.

(WIDOW COMES OUT OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE AND TAKES DOWN THE DRIED CLOTHES)

SHE THEN SITS DOWN ON THE STEPS OF THE PORCH WITH HER AUTOHARP AND PLAYS WHILE SINGING.)

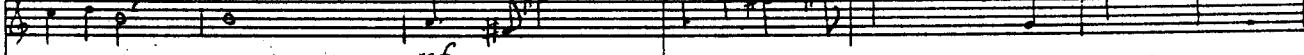
LENTO $\text{♩} = 69$

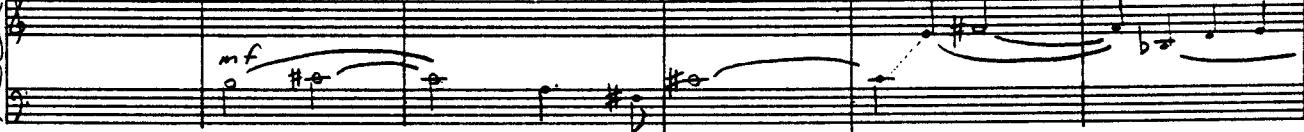
THE WIDOW'S SONG

HARMONICA (OR OBOE) 

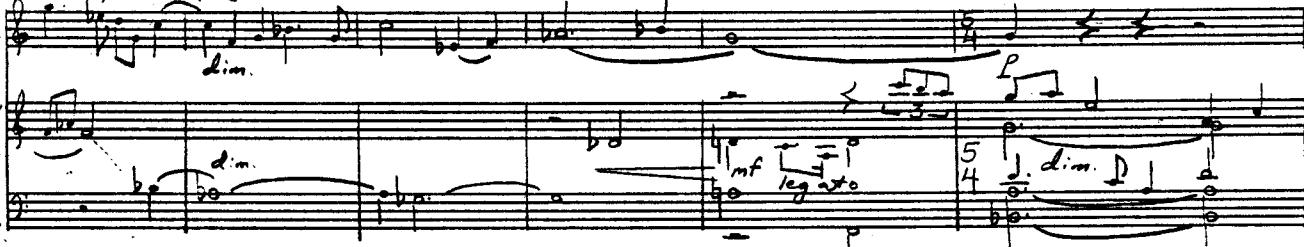
10

(FROM HERE PIANO PLAY HARMONICA LINE IF UNPLAYABLE)

HARM 

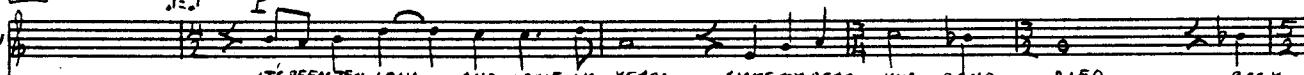
PIANO II 

15

HARM 

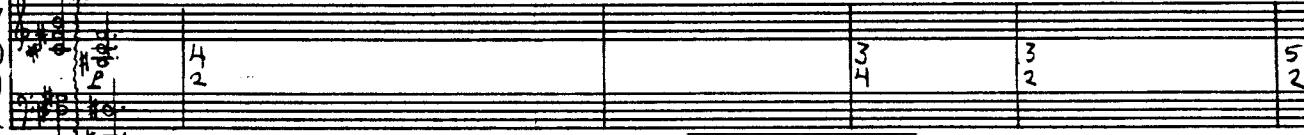
PN. II 

20

WIDOW 

IT'S BEEN TEN LONG AND LONE-LY YEARS SINCE MY DEAR HUS-BAND DIED. BACK

HARPSICHORD (LUTE STOP) 

PN. II 

* ARROWS IN THIS SONG INDICATE DIRECTION OF ARPEGGIO.

40

45

W. GIVE HIS SPEECH IN COURT A DAY A-GO,
PN.II

W. ALL THIS TIME HE WAS TO BE MY BEAU.
PN.II

AD LIB.

45

W. HIS EV'RY POLISHED PHRASE;
PN.I

W. AND HIS LOVE
PN.I

50

W. FOR THE SOUTH RE-MIND ME OF OLD DAYS.
HARM.

d.m.

AS AT FIRST : = 69

55

W. IF EV-ER THERE COULD BE A MAN TO TAKE MY HUS-BAND'S PLACE,
HARM.

HPSCD

60

cresc.

— 3 —

46

mp

W.
HARM.
HPSCD.
PN. II

COLD - NEL IS THE ONLY ONE TO MATCH HIS STYLE AND GRACE.

65

dim.

W.
HARM.
HPSCD.
PN. II

BUT CAN I TELL HIM HOW I FEEL? AND DOES HE NO - TICE ME? I WON - DER, OH I

mf

70 A.D. LIB.

— 3 —

A TEMPO

W.
HARM.
HPSCD.
PN. II

WON - - DER
IF MY LIFE WITH HIM COULD BE?

6 (LUTE STOP OFF)

75 f dim. e morendo

W.
PN.II

(WIDOW RETURNS TO THE CLOTHES AND FOLDS THEM OUT OF HEARING OF THE NEXT DIALOGUE.)

80

RIT.

HARM.
PN.II

A SECRET BOYFRIEND

ALLEGRETTO J.=104 (HIRAM CREEPS IN STAGE LEFT, DRESSED IN A RIDICULOUS MIXTURE OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY RUFFLES AND SOUTHERN OVERALLS. HE APPROACHES THE SECOND)

85

HARMONICA
PN.II

STORY WINDOW. READING FROM A BOOK, HE QUOTES SHAKESPEARE IN A HEAVY SOUTHERN DRAWL.)

HIRAM
(SPOKEN)

"BUT SAWFET-WHAT LITE THROO YONDERWINDER
BREAKS? IT IZ THE EAST AND JOULIET
IZ THE SUN—"

LAURALEE
FLUTE

(STILL DRESSING, PUTTING HER HEAD OUT OF THE UPPER WINDOW)

HIRAM!

YOU BE

HARPSICHORD

75 f dim. e morendo

W.
PN.II

(WIDOW RETURNS TO THE CLOTHES AND FOLDS THEM OUT OF HEARING OF THE NEXT DIALOGUE.)

80

RIT.

HARM.
PN.II

A SECRET BOYFRIEND

ALLEGRETTO. J.=104 (HIRAM CREEPS IN STAGE LEFT, DRESSED IN A RIDICULOUS MIXTURE OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY RUFFLES AND SOUTHERN OVERALLS. HE APPROACHES THE SECOND)

85

HARMONICA
PN.II

STORY WINDOW. READING FROM A BOOK, HE QUOTES SHAKESPEARE IN A HEAVY SOUTHERN DRAWL.)

HIRAM
(SPOKEN) 90

"BUT SAWFT-WHAT LITE THROO YONDERWINDER
BREAKS? IT IZ THE EAST AND JOELIET
IZ THE SUN—"

LAURALEE 95 (STILL DRESSING, PUTTING HER HEAD OUT OF THE UPPER WINDOW)

FLUTE

FLUTE

HARPICHORD

[100] f [105]

L.L. QUI-ET OR MAW WILL HEAR YOU! AND MY NAME'S NOT JOO-LI-ET!

HPSO. trum trum trum

BUT I JIST LARNED SOME PODERTAY FIR YER EARS, LAURA LEE. AND ANYWAY IT SAYS IN THIS HERE BOOK THAT I'ZE GOTTA GET DRESSED UP IN THESE SISSY-LOOKIN' CLOE'S, AND COME TO YER BALCONY, WHATEVER THAT IS, AND SAY THESE PRETTY THINGS, LIKE THIS:
"IT IS MY LADY, OOOOOOOOO IT IS MY LUV.
OOOOOOOOOO THAT SHE KNEW SHE WERE—"

HIRAM

PN. I

[110] mf

L.L. BE QUIET! YOU HEAR? SHHHHH! NOW GO, BE-FORE MAW FINDS OUT A-BOUT

HPSO.

[115]

L.L. YOU AND ME AND OUR PLAN! COLONEL

HPSO.

[120]

LL. STAR-BOT-TLE'S COMING AN-Y MINUTE! 8va SO, SHEW! BEFORE I TAKE A SWITCH TO YE!

FL.

HPSO.

[125]

HIRAM

PN.II { *f* b = sf d^{dim.}

Parting iz sich sweeeeeet sorrr,
THAT I SHALL SAY 'GOOD-NITE' TILL
IT BE MORRRR."

[130] MODERATO $\text{J}=88$ (INNOCENTLY, TO WIDOW OPPOSITE) P

L.L.

FL.

HPSCD.

MAW, I SEE THE

PN.II { *p* *pp* *PPP*

[135]

L.L. COLO-NEL DOWN THE ROAD. 8va -3 WILL YOU TELL HIM I'LL BE DOWN AS SOON AS I GET

FL.

HPSCD. legato bd p

[140]

L.L. DRESSED? WE'RE GO-IN' TO DIS-CUSS THE CASE SOME MORE.

FL.

HPSCD. (CHANGE TO PIANO) 3 4

PN.II { 5 4 3 4

[140]

L.L. DRESSED? WE'RE GO-IN' TO DIS-CUSS THE CASE SOME MORE.

FL.

HPSCD. (CHANGE TO PIANO) 3 4

PN.II { 5 4 3 4

L'ISTESO TEMPO $\text{d}=88$

mf

50

(LAURA LEE GOES BACK INSIDE FROM THE WINDOW SILL)

[145]

W.

PN.II

YES, DAR-TER.

This section shows two staves. The top staff is for 'W.' (mezzo-soprano) and the bottom for 'PN.II' (piano). The piano part includes dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'pp'. The vocal line has lyrics: 'YES, DAR-TER.' The page number '50' is at the top center, and measure numbers '145' are in a box above the piano staff.

W.

PN.II

P 3

150

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO IM-PRESS THE COLONEL WHILE WE'RE A - LONE.

600

This section continues with the same two staves. The piano part has dynamics 'P' and '3'. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'THIS IS MY CHANCE TO IM-PRESS THE COLONEL WHILE WE'RE A - LONE.'. Measure number '150' is indicated above the piano staff, and '600' is written vertically on the right side.

APPLE CIDER

PRESTO $\text{d}=132$

(WIDOW TIDIES HERSELF. COLONEL ENTERS STAGE RIGHT)

[155]

PIANO I

PIANO II

This section shows two staves for 'PIANO I' and 'PIANO II'. Both staves have dynamics 'ff' and '8'. The piano parts are active with various note patterns throughout the measures.

(OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD SPIRITS)

A PIACERE

COLONEL

160

GOOD DAY, WI-DOW CAL-HOUN

PN. I

cresc.

PN. II

cresc.

This section shows two staves. The top staff is for 'COLONEL' and the bottom for 'PN. I' (piano). The piano part has dynamics 'ff' and 'cresc.'. The vocal line starts with '(OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD SPIRITS)' and then 'A PIACERE' followed by 'GOOD DAY, WI-DOW CAL-HOUN'. Measure number '160' is indicated above the piano staff. The piano part continues with 'cresc.' and 'ff' dynamics.

L'ISTESO TEMPO I=88

mf

50

(LAURA LEE GOES BACK INSIDE FROM THE WINDOW SILL)

[145]

W.

PN.II

YES, DAR-TER.

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO IM-PRESS THE COLONEL WHILE WE'RE A - LONE.

150

W.

PN.II

150

600

APPLE CIDER

PRESTO I.=132

(WIDOW TIDIES HERSELF. COLONEL ENTERS STAGE RIGHT)

[155]

PIANO I

PIANO II

ff

6/8

ff

COLONEL

PIANOS

cresc.

ff

cresc.

ff

(OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD SPIRITS)

A PIACERE

GOOD DAY, WIDOW CAL-HOUN

160

A TEMPO

C. [165] *mf* *dim.* *J.-J.*
 IS YOUR LOVE - LY DAUGH-TER AT HOME?

PN.I *ff*

PN.II *ff*

[170] *mp* *SLOWER J=88*
 I'VE COME TO CALL - AHEM - ON BUS' - NESS.
P *legato* *mp*

W. *mp* [175]
 WHY YES, COLO-NEL,
 SHE WILL BE DOWN

PN.I *mp*

W. [180]
 SOON. MEANWHILE, WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK?
 PN.I *cresc.*

mf [185] (WIDOW POURS CIDER FROM A JUG ON THE PORCH.
RITEN.)
 C. YES, THANK YOU.
 PN.I mf pp RITEN.
 SHE HANDS HIM THE CIDER AND BOTH OF THEM SIT ON A BENCH (CENTER-STAGE) mp
 A TEMPO [190] W. HERE IS SOME CI - DER.
 PN.I A TEMPO
 [195] mf RUBATO [3] A TEMPO
 W. SO COLO-NEL, YOU SAID YOU DONT HAVE A 'WIFE?' mf
 C.
 PN.I A TEMPO NO, MADAM.
 [3] RUBATO [4] b.p.
 [200] W. A MAN LIKE YOU OUGHT TO BE MARRIED.
 C. I HAVE NEVER HAD TO THINK OF SUCH A NE-
 PN.I

[205]

(THINKS IT OVER)

L'ISTESO TEMPO $\text{d}=88$

p
BUT VE-RY RE-CENT-LY

C
PN.I

[210]

I HAVE BEEN — AHEM — E-NA - MOURED

OF A CER-TAIN YOUNG FE - MALE.

PN.I

ALLEGRETTO $\text{d}=112$

W.
mf
OH? IS THAT TRUE NOW?

[215] sf
mf cresc.
A YOUNGER BELLE, YOU

A PIACERE

[220]

(COLONEL SEEKS PUZZLED. WIPOW

HAVE YOU EV-ER THOUGHT A - BOUT THE AD-VAN-TAGES OF MA - TU-RI-TY?

4 (CHANGE TO HARPSICHORD LUTE STOP) 7 8

TAKES THE CIDER IN HER HAND.)
ANDANTE $\text{d}=208$

[225] *mp*
THIS CI - DER A SHORT TIME A-

HARPSICHORD
7 *mp* 8
sempre staccato

W.
GO WAS JIST PLAIN AP - PLE JUICE. IT

HPSD.

[230]
W.
TAS - TED SWEET AND SU - GARY BUT HAD NO STRONG - ER USE.

HPSD.

[235]
W.
IN TIME THE AP - PLE JUICE MA - TURED AND
(LUTE STOP OFF)

HPSD.

PN. II
mf > d.m. P simile
CRES. RITEN. [240] LENTO $\text{d}=69$ mf
NOW TASTES DIFFERENT: THE AS - IING BROUGHT A MELLOW - NESS,
PN. II CRES. RITEN. CON PED.

RUBATO ALLEGRETTO $\text{d}=104$ RECIT.
W. MORE AP - PEALING SCENT.
C.
PN. II MP

I'M AF - RAID I DO NOT UN - DER - STAND YOUR

(BEFORE SHE CAN FINISH, LAURA LEE APPEARS,
IN THE DOORWAY IN ALL HER INNOCENT SPLENDOR,
NOW DRESSED IN FULL REGALIA, STILL WITH A
PARASOL. COLONEL, STUNNED, INTERRUPTS THE WIDOW)

245 *P* LET ME SEE... WHAT I MEANT WAS— PRESTO $\text{d} = 132$

W. C. PN. II MEANING. MISS CAL-HOUN'

250 *mf* PLEA-SURE TO SEE YOU A-GAIN!

C. PN. II

(SO INNOCENTLY) 255 *P* SLOWER $\text{d} = 100$

LAURA LEE THANK YOU, COLONEL STAR-BOT-TLE

HISCO

PN. II SLOWER $\text{d} = 100$

(SOMEWHAT LET DOWN) 260 *mp*

W. WELL, I KNOW YOU TWO HAVE TO DIS-CUSS YOUR CASE. I SURE HOPE YOU CAN HELP LAU-RA

PN. II

[265] (EXIT WIDOW INTO THE HOUSE WITH LAUNDRY. COLONEL BOWS)

W.
LEE.

PN. II
p mf

[270] (AND HOLDS THE DOOR FOR HER)

PN. II
b p
dim.

THE COLONEL AND LAURA LEE

[275] REC IT. (TO LAURA LEE)
MODERATO $\text{d}=112$ *mf*

COLONEL
I HAVE HAD — AHEM — AN IN-TER-VIEW WITH MIS-TER HOTCHKISS, BUT I RE-

PIANO II
p *mf* *sf*

[280]

C. GRET TO SAY THERE SEEKS TO BE NO PROSPECT OF — AHEM — COMPROMISE.

FLUTE
p

HARPSICHORD
p

PN. II
p

(EXIT WIDOW INTO THE HOUSE WITH LAUNDRY. COLONEL BOWS)

W.
LEE.

[265] PN. II

AND HOLDS THE DOOR FOR HER)

[270] PN. II

THE COLONEL AND LAURA LEE

REC IT. (TO LAURA LEE)
MODERATO $\text{d}=112$ mf

COLONEL
I HAVE HAD — AHEM — AN IN-TER-VIEW WITH MIS-TER HATCH-KISS, BUT I RE-

PIANO II

[275]

C. GRET TO SAY THERE SEEMS TO BE NO PROSPECT OF — AHEM — COMPROMISE.

FLUTE

HARPSICHORD

[280] PN. II

(EXITED, LEADING HIM TO THE BENCH)

57

[285]

Laura Lee *p*

WASHE MAD WHEN YOU TOLD HIM?

HE EXPRESSED HIS IN-TENTION OF EM-PLOY-ING COUNSEL AND DEFENDING A

C.

FL.

HPSD.

PN. II

mf

(MOVING NEARER TO HIM)

L.L.

mf

THEN YOU'LL FIGHT HIM, TOOTH AND NAIL?

YOU'LL GIVE HIM FITS?

AND YOU'LL MAKE HIM PAY?

C.

SUIT.

HPSD.

3 4

mf

b cr. 6

6 (CHANGE TO PIANO)

4 b cr. 8

PN. II

3 4

6

4 f 8

> CHIRAM APPEARS BEHIND A TREE STAGE RIGHT, OUT OF THE COLONEL'S SIGHT, BUT IN LAURA LEE'S VIEW.

ALLEGRETTO $\text{J} = 104$

mf

[295]

I-

DO MY BEST.

C.

I-

ANEM - I'LL CERTAIN-LY

PN. II

6 f

8

mp

LAURA LEE FRANTICALLY BUT SECRETLY SIGNALS HIRAM TO STAY HIDDEN DURING THE ENSUING DIALOGUE)

(LAURA LEE KISSES THE
COLONEL'S HAND)

AD LIB.

mp

[300] A TEMPO $\text{J} = 104$ *mf*

L.L.

YOUR BEST WILL SHORELY BE E - NOUGH!

YOU DO IT! LOR-DY, JIST

PN. II

6 8

mp

L.L. 2 305 YOU TALK FOR ME LIKE YOU DID FER HIS OLD DITCH COMPANY, AND YOU'LL FETCH IT, EV'-RY TIME!

PN.II

L.L. 310 WHY, WHEN YOU MADE THAT JU-RY SIT UP YES-TER-DAY, I COULD A' JIST RUN O-VER AND

PN.II Cresc.

L.L. f 315 A PIACERE 2 KISSED YOU RIGHT THERE, BE-FORE THE WHOLE COURT!

PN.II ff

(LAURA LEE AND COLONEL LAUGH, LAURA LEE GIVES HIRAM A THREATENING LOOK AND FIST, SO HIRAM FINALLY HIDES, FOR NOW)

C. 320 I MUST ASK YOU - AHEM - TO DI-RECT YOUR

PN.II mf 3 8va. 3/4 mf legato

C. 325 ME-MO-RY TO AN-OTH-ER POINT. THE BREAKING-OFF OF THE EN-GAGE-MENT- 3 DID HE GIVE ANY

PN.II

59

mf > [330]

NO HE JIST QUIT.

L.L. C. PN.II

RE-A-SON FOR IT, OR SHOW AN-Y CAUSE?

AND NA-TU-RAL-LY

[335]

(LAURA LEE RAISES HER EYES AND SMILES IN REPLY)

C. PN.II

YOU WERE NOT CON-SIOUS OF AN-Y REA-SON FOR HIS DO-ING SO?

5 mp 3
dim. 4 4

ANDANTE $\text{d}=58$

[340]

C. PN.II

(SPEAKING:) I SEE-NONE, OF COURSE, WE SHALL BEGIN PROCEEDINGS AT ONCE.

(LAURA LEE NODS.
COLONEL IS IN RAPTURE)

C. PN.II

I MUST, HOWEVER, CAUTION YOU TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT THIS CASE TO ANYONE UNTIL YOU ARE IN COURT.

Cresc. 2 4

[345] $\text{d}=\text{d}.=132$

PRESTO f

C. PN.II

GOOD DAY, MISS CAL-HOUN.

I HOPE TO CALL ON YOU A-

355 AD LIB.

C. GAIN SOON — ANEM — A-BOUT THIS BUS'-NESS.

PN.II A TEMPO $\text{J}=132$ 8va 360

PIANO I ff (CHANGE TO HARPSICHORD)

(EXIT COLONEL STAGE RIGHT. HIRAM IN NICK OF TIME HIDES FROM COLONEL AS HE LEAVES. LAURA LEE

PN.II ff pp ff pp

HPSCD. mf tr

GRABS HIRAM BY EAR AND PULLS HIM OUT OF THE BUSHES)

PN.II cresc.

L.L. (SPEAKING:) HIRAM (IN PAIN): L.L. ALLEGRETTO $\text{J}=104$ (LAURA LEE TAKES HIRAM

YOU DARNED IDIOT! YOU ALMOST RUINED EVERYTHIN': "SHE SPEAKS, OOOO SPEEAK AGAIN, BRIGHT ANGEL, FOR THOU ART AS GLORIOUS—" OH, SHUT UP. YOU COME WITH ME SO MAW DON'T SEE US.

FL. tr f

HPSCD. tr

PN.I tr

BEHIND THE HOUSE IN A SUGGESTIVE MANNER)

FL. dim. RITEN. 375

PN.II A TEMPO CURTAIN PPP

dim. RITEN. PPP